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AUTHOR Spoek, Frits
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ABSTRACT

This article summarizes recent information on the changing role of professional guidance and the linkages between different services in the Netherlands. The article is organized in three sections. Section 1 highlights some fundamental characteristics of the Dutch educational system. Section 2 examines the structure of the existing guidance services in the Netherlands. Of particular note are: (1) the location of guidance services; (2) the focus of the services; (3) the range of guidance activities; (4) the financing of the services; and (5) staffing and training. Section 3 examines two new initiatives of linkages: (1) regionalization of career service institutions and education-employment liaison; and (2) the establishment of rural service centers. A glossary of acronyms is included. (KC)

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CAREERS GUIDANCE IN THE NETHERLANDS

Introduction

In this article you will find some recent information on the changing role of professional guidance and the linkages between different services in the Netherlands.
Partly the article is a summary of the report written for the European Commission in 1987[1)], partly the article describes new trends and activities.
Section one highlights some fundamental characteristics of the Dutch educational system.
Section two examines the structure of the existing services in the Netherlands, attention will be paid to:[2)]

- the location of guidance services: the extent to which they are based within educational institutions, in seperate agencies and in official labour market organisations;
- the focus of the services: The extent to which they are concerned with educational guidance with vocational and social guidance;
- the range of the guidance activities: the extent to which they are concerned with information, with assessment, with advice, with counseling, with careers education and with placement;
- the financing of the services: the extent to which they are funded by central government, by regional or local authorities, or privately;
- staffing and training;
- section three examines two new initiatives of linkages.

Section 1: Highlights of the Dutch educational system

The Dutch educational system is complex and stratified and students have to make many important choices which may influence their future careers.
Compulsory schooling starts at the age of 5 and ends at the end of the schoolyear in which the student has reached the age of 16.
Primary education lasts eight years (4-12). At the end of primary education, students have to make their first important decision choosing between general education (AVO) and vocational education (LBO).
The first year of secondary school is a transition class and is used to review the appropiateness of the allocations of individual students.
After the age of 16 pupils are now divided into those receiving pre-university (VWO) and general secondary education (HAVO), and those receiving secondary vocational education (fulltime MBO and parttime the apprenticeship system) and those who have left school.
Both in pre-university and general secondary vocational education students must choose six or seven examination subjects to pursue in the final two years of their courses.
The subjects with students have chosen for their final examination determine which colleges are open to them in higher vocational and university education.
The above described educational system is confronted with some main problems:

- demographic developments: the number of pupils participating in vocational training is expected to fall dramatically.
  For the year 2000 a fall of 40% is foreseen;

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- labour market: there is a growing need of students with a secondary and higher vocational educational level. Now there are to many students with an inadequate educational level or with a diploma from general education;
- the profit of vocational education: between 20% and 40% of the population in vocational education leaves school without any qualification.[3)]

In the educational system two measures are being taken to reduce the above-mentioned problems.
First the introduction of a period of 2 years of general education (basisvorming). Its main purposes are:
- a general exchangement of the educational level for youngsters;
- reducing the unequal chances in the educational system;
- postponing of making choices for further education;
- at about the age of 14 pupils can start preparatory vocational education in combination with general education.

This new system also offers possibilities for career guidance.
- The former types of schools (LBO/MAVO/HAVO and VWO) are encouraged to establish what is called "broader" colleges.
- Colleges have the possibility of creating special hours for career education during the first two years of comprehensive education.
- For the last year of comprehensive education the Institute of Curriculum development[4)] made a series of 13 lessons on career education.
- Students are offered the possibility of work experiences.
- Within three of the foreseen 14 subjects career education will play an important role. These subjects are: Technics, Economy and History.

Second the reform of secondary vocational education.
Its main targets are:
- merging between schools with different vocational programs and with short vocational programs;
- reform of the curriculum. The programs will be structured and offered to students in the form of modules;
- all new schools for secondary vocational education have to offer to students a one year program on career education.
  This program is destinated for those youngsters who did not make a choice for the many programs offered in vocational education or who are missing the starting qualifications for these programs.

Section II: The structure and staffing of professional guidance services

1. Introduction

In this section the vocational guidance and counselling activities of the various institutions involved both inside and outside the educational system will be described.
In order to acquire a better understanding of what is going on, some historical remarks are necessary.
All private initiatives in education and counselling historically have a sectarian background. whether catholic, protestant or neutral.
In daily practice, sectarism is fading away.

A second important point has to do with ideas in Dutch society about work. There is much emphasis on self-realisation as a personal responsibility.
Activities in the field of guidance and counselling should be designed to be helpfull but not forcefull.[5)]
Accordingly, many activities have the inclusion of helping clients to enlarge their freedom of choice.
A third historical point is that in schools the idea is strongly entrenched that every teacher is a counsellor, even in the case of vocational guidance and that counselling forms an integral part of the curriculum.[6)]

There are three roles concerned with counselling activities in secondary education:
- Mentors.
  Most students find themselves attached to a member of the teaching staff of a school. The role of this mentor varies between providing a congenial social setting for the students life at school to providing more serious help and support for students in times of anxiety, distress, dilemma or failure.
- School counsellor.
  These tend to develop their roles in the direction of offering expert help with personal problems, rather than with those of educational and vocational development.
- Careers teacher (schooldecaan).
  These are seen as experts. Their main task being to prepare students for their schoolleaving choices and transitions. Their role and activities will be discussed later in this section.

There are also various guidance services outside secondary education. The main educational and vocational guidance services are: Private Bureaux, National Institute for Educational measurement (Cito), Regional apprenticeship agencies (ROL), Employment agencies, Decaan (higher education and universities).

With so many people and organisations involved in educational and vocational services, it is hard to reach clear definitions of the activities that are going on and the people who are or who feel themselves as being responsible for them. Among the activities to be discussed later in this section are:
- providing information on jobs, educational possibilities, school subjects and related courses;
- assessment, incorporating the use of psychological testing;
- offering advice, based on the results of testing and individual talks with clients;
- counselling - helping clients te explore their present situation about the options open to them and about the consequences of each option;
- placement - helping clients to achieve entry to a particular job or course;
- careers education - the incorporation of some of the above - mentioned activities and of the developments of the skills necessary for adequate choices, into the school curriculum.

2. Guidance services in schools

Primary education

Guidance services in primary education appear to provide an important part of the context of the other services.
As already stated in section 1 at the age of 12/13, children and their parents have to make the first set of choices that will heavily determine the course of the childrens development.
As we have seen, there are two main streams in the educational system: a general stream with a strong emphasis on general subjects, and a vocational stream where the emphasis is more on practical and technical (pre-)vocational subjects.
The transfer from primary to secondary education can be based on evidence from three sources:

a. performance in a national test administered each year in more than 60% of the primary schools by the national Institute for educational measurement;
b. a report from the primary school usually made by the school principal;
c. support from regional or local school support centres, whose main task is to deliver support to schools and teachers on matters of curriculum and teaching practice and to test and help students with developmental adjustment and with learning problems.

In section 1 we already mentioned the introduction of a new law by 1991 (Basisvorming) of which one of its purposes is to put off choices at the age of 12/13 and which offers the possibility to integrate some career education activities into the curriculum.

Secondary education

Nearly all schools in the secondary educational system have one or more teachers who are specifically concerned with offering educational and vocational guidance services.
The task of the decaan in general is twofold:

a. to provide students with information on jobs, on the educational qualifications required for entry to them and on how to obtain these qualifications;
b. to make suggestions about the composition of the range of school subjects wich each student has to take.

The time available for the careers teachers to carry out these activities is limited.
It depends on the number of students in the school, the hours the school generally has available for work other than direct teaching (taakuren) and the priorities of the school Board.
Except in the first three years of secondary education, the curricular timetable does not mention careers education as a subject.
Accordingly, the attention given to the process of educational and vocational guidance differs from school to school.
Some research has been done on the activities to which the decanen attached the highest priority:

- assistance in making choices - which stream and which subjects;
- guidance of schoolleavers;
- individual talks with students;
- building up a documention system.

In research reports also much emphasis is put on the difficulties decanen meet in executing their activities:
- the lack of time available in schools;
- the role and position of decanen in relation to the other teachers and experts;
- the poor quality of information documentation;
- the difficulties in gaining a room , a desk or a telephone of their own.

In the future the position of the decaan could be more problematic according to the new budget system in education. Dutch Government has the intention to decentralize the responsibility for the financing and staffing of the schools to the school board.
Some decanen are afraid that is with new system there will be no place for their activities.

In vocational education we already mentioned the changes that will take place in secondary vocational education (MBO).
All new merged schools have to offer a one year program on career education.
For this one year program a new curriculum has been developed.[7)]

In vocational training, mention must be made of educational and vocational guidance services in the apprenticeship system.
This service is provided by the so-called Regional Apprenticeship Agencies (ROL).
The organisations are grant aided by the Ministry of Education and Science. The main tasks of the advisors (consulenten) working in these organisations are:
- providing information and individual guidance for students on educational possibilities offered by the apprenticeship system;
- social pedagogical counselling of students in the apprenticeship system;
- registration of pupils leaving junior general (MAVO) and junior vocational (LBO) education and registration of pupils attending the apprenticeship system.[8)]

Besides the above mentioned activities in secondary education we must mention some experiences on career education, which are executed voluntary by some schools.
- Learning by working-experience (AEL).
  In this programming a short three week period of work experience is provided. In the program pupils carry out work tasks within work environments, but without taking on the full identity of a worker. The program starts with one week preparation and ends with one week follow-up.
- The introduction of computers as ar aid in general and vocational guidance. The most well known system in the Netherlands which is fully operational is "Choices", it consists of more than twenty modules. Choices is a decision making program which an open acress to clients. Dutch government subsidised a data basa system I-see. This system will operate as a help for guidance practitionars.

Higher vocational education

Higher vocational education has just finished a period of merging which resulted in approximately 60 institutes. A typical institute will offer a variety of courses to 3000-6000 students.

In a publication from the Ministry of Education, special attention is paid to the consequences of these changes for educational and vocational guidance services in higher vocational education.[9)]

One consequence is that the total number of study possibilities which students will have in their institute will in general be very much wider, while the length of time a student can be enrolled in an institute will be limited, so a wrong choice could be penalised.
Another consequence is connected with changes in the funding of higher professional education and the general decline in the number of potential students. In the light of this, growing competition between institutes to enrol students is likely.
This tendency will be strenghthened by the policy of the Ministry of Education for both universities and higher vocational education to be more market-oriented.
Some teachers involved in the merging process in secondary vocational education foreseen the same consequences for that type of education.
For students it will become more and more difficult to find their way through the many study possibilities, to distinguish between subjective advertisement and objective information and to make adequate choices.
In the publication, the establishment of an independent organisation to produce objective information materials is accordingly recommended.
Both higher vocational education and universities have careers teachers in services. The activities comprise:
- providing information and guidance on course options, limitations on entrance, grants and military service;
- providing help and advice on personal problems or problems which have to do with life as a student.

3. Guidance Services outside the Educational System

Guidance services in manpower agencies

In Dutch Parlement a new law on the activities and the organisation of manpower agencies is in discussion now. The existing 68 local employment offices will disappear. In future there will be 28 regional bureaux of manpower supply. Their direction will not be longer the Ministry of Social Affairs, but their board will consists of representatives of the Dutch administration, employers and employee-organisations. Their main job will be to match supply and demand in the labour market.
There will be one Central Board of manpower supply.
This Central Board will make general rules for subsidising activities of third parties involved in activities on career guidance. Up till now nearly all the existing emploment offices have their own activities.
In future the regional bureaux only execute career guidance activities that will not be done by others (schools, private bureaux, etc.).
In practice this mean they will concentrate on activities for adults and youngsters who are unemployed and who can't make use of activities of others without paying for it.[10)]

Guidance services in private guidance bureaux

Private guidance bureaux operate under a system of regulations introduced in 1986.
Only the activities actually performed are subsidised, not the institution as a whole.

Only those activities named in a program do be published each year by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Affairs will be subsidised.
There are three kinds of activities which may be state-aided, all of which must focus on students aged 16 and over.

Activity grants.
These might cover extensive or more limited personal assessments, guided personal visits to the information corner and group guidance.
The money available for these activities within each private bureau is limited and has to be contained within a budget allocated by the government to a province (of which there are 13 in the Netherlands), based on the total number of its inhabitants. It is also possible for private bureaux to cooperate and make arrangements with each other to apply for a subsidy based on a joint provincial plan. If they do not do this and if the total demands from the bureaux on a province exceed the provincial budget, the institutions providing the cheapest activities will get their money first.

Contract grants.
This subsidy is twofold: one is disigned for educational and vocational guidance services in secondary education, the other is designed for clients from the manpower agencies.
Both must be based on written agreements. The agreement for secondary schools must be based on at least 20.000 students. Schools have to pay for the activities mentioned in the agreement: they will then recieve 11.50 guilders per student from the government and will charge 1.90 guilders to the students themselves.

Project grants.
This subsidy is designed to support educational and vocational guidance services both in schools and in the employment services if the school or service participates in a state-aided experiment or project in the field of secondary education and for special intermediation.
Other conditions which have to be satisfied in order to become state aided are:
- each bureau must have on duty at least one psychologist with a university degree and at last one careers specialist who has graduated from one of the two training institutions for careers officers;
- the bureau has to be strongly controlled by an inspector who will look at the effectiveness and appropriateness of the methods of assessment and advice as well as the quality and objectivity of the guidance materials used.

4. Staffing and Training

The responsibility for in-service training for career teachers (decanen) and counsellors is brought into the New Schools of Education (NLO's).
The NLO courses are on a one-day-a-week basis, covering 30 days in the first year and 15 in the second.
The first year is destinied both for the career teachers and the counsellors. During the second year they operate seperately.
The content of the course consists of four clusters:
1. counselling-theory, practicum and group dynamica;
2. curriculum studies, educational aspects of counselling, introduction of counselling into the school system, theory of social change;

3. sociology and psychology of the life cycle, encyclopaedia of helping agencies;
4. decanaat - knowledge of the world of work, knowledge of professions, knowledge of educational opportunities, information systems, practicum.[11)]

Guidance personal in private guidance bureaux and employment agencies are mainly either psychologists or career specialists. Psychologists are trained in a graduate psychology program in one of the universities. Career specialists are trained in two academies for careers officers (the Academie Mens en Arbeid in Tilburg and Deventer); the program takes four years to complete.

Section III: Linkages

So far, we have described the Dutch educational system and the main people and institutions involved in educational and vocational guidance services.
We also paid attention to some new developments in the educational system, the private bureaux and the employment agencies.
in general the before described structure of guidance services displays considerable fragmentation and discontinuity.
Historically this has a.o. to do with the situation that most of the activities in the field of career guidance are the responsibility of two governmental bodies, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education.
Cooperation between the two has been problematic for a long time.
The situation changed in 1984 by setting up by both Ministries, the Inter-Ministrial Steergroup on Careers Guidance and Information (ISBV).
Its installation can be seen as an important effort designed to achieve more coherence between the activities of the two ministries.
The main tasks of the ISBV is to make policy proposals applying to both Ministries; to provide coherence and cooperation between those carrying out concrete activities both in- and outside schools; and to be in touch with coordinating activities performed by both governmental and non-governmental organisations.
As a result of the work of the ISBV in this section we will pay attention to two important activities:
- regionalisation of career service institutions and education-employment liaison;
- the establishment of a rural service centre.

Regionalisation of career service institutions and education-employment liaison

Under this title both, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Social Affairs, published in january 1990 a policy report.[12)]
The report presents a model for a regional structure of the services on vocational and career guidance and for the transition between education and the world of work.
The proposals for the restructuring of the services are intended for those organisations other than educational institutions and employment services.
Involved are the private bureaux and the central association of regional agencies described in section II and the Education-Employment Liaison Centres (COA's).

COA's have been installed as from 1982 in each Dutch province. These centres have started to put some of the ideas about greater regional coordination in practice.
The activities of the above mentioned new regional service centres will be complementary to the activitie of the educational institutions and the labour market bureaux.
The process of mergers and reallocation must be finished before the end of 1993. There is a possibility for other bureaux operating in the field of adult education to join the regional centres.

The activities of the regional centres in the field of educational and vocational guidance will be:
- providing information on the possibilities of jobs and education;
- offering advice, if necessary, based on diagnostic helps;
- counselling;
- on request providing support to educational institutions and labour market offices;
- building up and maintain an information centre.

In the field of the liaison between education and the world of work the activities will be concentrated on:
- stimulating, initiating and, if necessary, coordinating new activities which will promote the transition from school to work;
- promoting work experience activities both for teachers and students;
- offering services to those who promote the transition from school to work;
- maintain a platformm on behalf of cooperation and deliberation on the field of the liaison education work consisting of representatives of the regional industrial circles and representatives of regional educational institutions.

Financing of the new centres will be based on contracts between labour market bureaux and schools just as described in section II. The phenomenon already exists for contracts between schools in secondary education and private bureaux.

In the policy report is stated that all the organisations involved in the mergers in general agree with the proposals.

Rural service centres

In the above mentioned policy document, also the establishment of a rural service centre is anounced as an important support development for educational and vocational guidance services.
In an article published in 1989[13] the following tasks for this centre is mentioned:
- to produce or let produce computerised, written and audiovisual materials. The centre will be responsible for the quality, the reliability and the completenesses of the resource materials;
- to develop activities which have the intention to promote expertness;
- perform research on the need of materials;
- to develop a system of quality certification and career services.

The centre will become an independent operating organisation and subsidised by the government.

With these two initiatives a few linkage problems in the Netherlands have come to an end. The problems with the schoolteacher (decanen) described in section II still exists. It is to be expected that this activities will be taken over by the new regional centres.

Frits Spoek

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2. A.G. Watts: Educational and vocational guidance services for the 14-25 age group in the European Community, Maastricht 1988.

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4. SLO: Beroepenoriëntatie, november 1988, lesson 1 until 14.

5. Directoraat Generaal voor de Arbeidsvoorziening: Voortgangsnota Beroepenvoorlichting, March 1982.

6. Landelijke Pedagogische Centra: Integratie Keuzebegeleiding op school, Alphen aan de Rijn/Brussel 1988.

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13. Decanoloog april/may 1989.

GLOSSARY

AEL	learning by working experience
AVO	secondary general education
CITO	national institute for educational measurement
COA	education-employment liaison centre
CORO	central association of regional agencies
HAVO	senior general secondary education
ISBV	inter ministrial steering group on careers guidance and information
LBO	junior secondary vocational education
MAVO	junior general secondary education
MBO	senior secondary vocational education
NLO	new schools of education
ROL	regional apprenticeship agencies
SLO	national institute for curriculum development
VWO	secondary general education (pre-university)